



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

**173<sup>rd</sup> COMMISSION MEETING ON MONDAY 24 AUGUST 2015  
AT 10:00 IN THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH  
STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

**In attendance:** Les Allamby  
Alan McBride  
Marion Reynolds  
Christine Collins  
Grainia Long  
Milton Kerr  
Paul Yam

**Present:** Virginia McVea, Director  
David Russell, Deputy Director

**Present for part  
of meeting:** Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant  
Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker  
Dan Morris, Research Assistant  
Kellie Turtle, Education Worker  
Colin Caughey, Policy Worker

**Apologies:** John Corey

**1. Stormont House Agreement**

- 1.1 There was detailed further discussion on the Stormont House Agreement analysis document. A considerable number of amendments were agreed most, but, not all unanimously. It was agreed to provide both a tracked changed and clean version to Commissioners to ensure

that the agreed changes have been comprehensively captured.

## **2. Minutes of the 172<sup>nd</sup> Commission meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes of 172<sup>nd</sup> Commission meeting were considered and agreed subject to incorporating additional detail on the Director's report re: funding.

## **3. Matters arising**

- 3.1 Commissioners were updated on the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions chair position (item 1.1.2.4 of the previous minutes refers).

## **4. Chief Commissioner Report**

- 4.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on his recent meetings. These included:
- RQIA
  - Chevening Scholars from Philippines (part of NICO visit)
  - CAJ
  - Human Rights Consortium
  - Public Health Agency
  - David Seymour, Independent Reviewer of Justice and Security Act
  - Marie Curie
  - US Consul General
  - Community Engagement day in West Belfast
  - Westminster:  
Laurence Robertson MP, Chair NI Affairs Select Committee  
Dominic Grieve MP  
Ivan Lewis MP  
Dominic Raab MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice  
Murray Hunt, Clerk to the Joint Committee on Human Rights  
Keir Starmer MP

## **5. Commissioner Report**

- 5.1 Commissioner Paul Yam reported on the CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-Equinet Platform on Hate crime event he attended Riga. A number of presentations produced at the event were circulated.

5.2 In his absence Commissioner John Corey had forwarded a note of his contacts with political parties on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

## **6. Director's Report**

6.1 Commissioners noted the Director's report.

6.2 Commissioners were updated on the funding application for the chair of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

6.3 Commissioners were updated on the budget cuts for 2016 onwards. An in-year funding reduction is no longer being sought. The NIO had sought and received a paper on the proposed financial reductions and the impact on the Commission if such reductions were imposed. The Commissioners reiterated their determination to avoid redundancies if at all possible.

6.4 Commissioners were updated on the dates for Strategic Planning consultation. NGOs/Civil Society will be held on 21 September and Statutory Bodies on 23 September.

**Action: Stakeholder list to be emailed to Commissioners.**

6.5 Commissioners were updated on the Litigants in Person application that has been submitted.

## **7. NICS Web resource**

7.1 Commissioners received a detailed presentation of the (NICS) web resource tool and other products which will be launched in the autumn. There was discussion around how to maximize the benefit of the resource and to ensure process to keep the materials up to date. It was agreed the Chief Commissioner would seek a meeting with the head of the NICS.

**Action: Link to web resource to be sent to**

**Commissioners  
once work has  
been completed.**

**Action: Chief  
Commissioner to  
seek a meeting  
with the head of  
NICS**

## **8. Human Rights Business Forum**

- 8.1 Commissioners were updated on the background to the Human Right Business Forum which will now have business, trade union and NGO members. Meetings of the Forum will take place quarterly.
- 8.2 Commissioners were updated on the plan for producing a short guide on Human Rights for small businesses which will be discussed at the next forum meeting.
- 8.3 The next meeting of the Forum is on 8 September.

## **9. Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the International covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**

- 9.1 Commissioners were provided with a background briefing on the ICCPR and an overview of the concluding observations contained in the report. Commissioners wanted to see the Commission's own submission to the ICCPR Committee.

**Action: The Commissions  
own submission to  
be circulated to  
Commissioners.**

## **10. Any other business**

- 10.1 Commissioners discussed a possible speaker for the launch of the Human Rights Statement 2015.
- 10.2 Commissioners discussed the half day meeting between them, dates are still being arranged.

**Action:      Date to be confirmed.**